



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2

290 BROADWAY

NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

MAR - 8 2016

Mr. Jim Suggs
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

Dear Mr. Suggs:

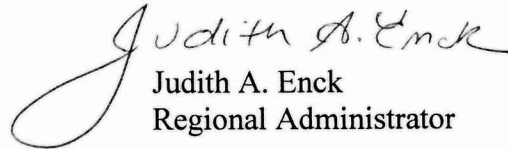
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martin Peña's final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and feasibility report for the Caño Martin Peña Ecosystem Restoration Project (CMP-ERP) (CEQ #20160035). This review was conducted in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C 7609, PL 91-604 12 (a), 84 Stat. 1709) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed project consists of the dredging of approximately 2.2 miles of the eastern half of the Caño Martín Peña, starting from the San José Lagoon towards the west, in the vicinity of the Luis Muñoz Rivera Avenue Bridge. The dredged canal will be 100 feet wide by 10 feet deep, with a natural bottom, and sheet pile walls capped with concrete. "Windows" will be placed in the sheet pile walls, providing a hydraulic connection that will allow the replanting of mangroves behind them. A weir will be constructed at the western edge of the project area to mitigate water flows into the adjacent waterways, and prevent scouring of the bottom of the canal. Several linear and discreet park areas are also planned as part of the project. Approximately 762,000 cubic yards of material will be dredged from the Caño Martín Peña using a clamshell or environmental bucket. The dredged material includes solid waste, consisting of household appliances, construction and demolition debris and garbage. The dredged material will be screened, solid waste removed for landfill disposal, and the remaining material placed in geotechnical bags and possibly disposed of in borrow pits in the San José Lagoon. Other actions will be performed prior to the project dredging, including the acquisition of 336 structures and relocation of 335 residents, and the relocation of the San José trunk sewer.

EPA acknowledges the Corps' responses to our comments on the Draft EIS. As stated in the October 2015 Memorandum of Understanding among the United States Army, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Corporacion del Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martin Peña, EPA plans to designate a full-time staff person to work with the community and local and Commonwealth agencies. We will provide technical assistance with respect to the dredging project, including the review of sampling plans and other technical plans, and by providing input and guidance for assessing the character of the dredged material in the Caño and San José Lagoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding this review or our comments, please contact Ariel Iglesias, Acting Director of the Clean Air and Sustainability Division at (212) 637-3736 or iglesias.ariel@epa.gov.

Sincerely,


Judith A. Enck
Regional Administrator